

Top Secret 233

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Wednesday October 6, 1976 CI NIDC 76-235C

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

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State Dept. review completed

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Wednesday October 6, 1976.

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[REDACTED] The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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LEBANON: Situation Report

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[redacted] The Syrians reportedly intend to resume their offensive against Palestinian and leftist strongholds, possibly as early as tomorrow.

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[redacted] [redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted] The Syrians may be bargaining with the Palestinians for concessions that could head off the offensive, but the reported Syrian demands seem to represent more an ultimatum than a bargaining position, and Damascus undoubtedly has no hope that they will be accepted.

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[redacted] The Syrians, [redacted] have indicated they will demand that the Palestinians agree:

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--To withdraw immediately from Alayh and the Shuf.

--To return to the refugee camps and presumably abide by other provisions of the Cairo accord.

--To change their present leadership, meaning apparently the removal of Yasir Arafat as head of Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

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[redacted] The demands may be laid down at a meeting that one leftist Beirut newspaper reports has been arranged for today or tomorrow at Sawfar between Syria's deputy defense minister and a Palestinian representative, possibly Salah Khalaf.

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[redacted] Although Damascus has stepped up its propaganda attacks on Arafat's leadership, it probably does not seriously believe it can engineer his ouster at present. By proposing such extreme terms and calling more openly for a change in PLO leadership, however, the Syrians probably hope to erode Arafat's base of support and split the ranks of the PLO between those with whom they believe an accommodation is possible and those, such as Arafat, whom they no longer trust.

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[redacted] The present lull in the fighting may therefore be intended more to encourage further rifts in the PLO leadership than to spur PLO acceptance of a cease-fire.

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[redacted] Although rumors are rife in Beirut that the offensive will be mounted against Alayh and the Shuf, Syria may have decided for both military and political reasons that these areas should be bypassed. An assault on Alayh, where the Palestinians appear well dug in, would encounter strong resistance, as occurred when Christian forces tried to attack the town last Friday. A successful offensive farther south would in any case leave Alayh and the Shuf isolated and cut off from most sources of resupply.

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[redacted] Damascus also is apparently sensitive about the reactions of Druze inhabitants of Alayh and the Shuf to military operations in their areas, primarily because anti-Syrian sentiment among the Lebanese Druze could spill over into the Druze community in Syria.

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[redacted] Following reported executions of Druze civilians by Christian forces during the mountain offensive last week, Lebanon's Druze leaders reportedly urged their compatriots in both Syria and Jordan to exert pressure on Syria to prevent further Christian excesses. A Druze delegation from the Alayh area is reported to have gone to Damascus yesterday to appeal for restraint from both Syrian and Christian forces.

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[Redacted]

KENYA-UGANDA: Relations

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[Redacted] Relations between Kenya and Uganda have been less hostile in recent weeks, but no resolution of basic differences is likely as long as Ugandan President Amin is in power. Kenya still considers him a threat to its security.

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[Redacted] In a meeting between Kenyan and Ugandan officials in Nairobi late last month, both sides said they were satisfied that the agreement reached in August had eased tensions created in part by Kenya's role in the Israeli rescue operation at Uganda's Entebbe airport.

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[Redacted] The two sides reaffirmed the need for peaceful relations and for compensating losses of life and property sustained during the period of tension. They also agreed to "minimize problems" in the delivery of petroleum to landlocked Uganda--a reference to Kenya's almost two-month slowdown of petroleum deliveries following the Entebbe operation.

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[redacted] The Kenyan representative to the talks told a US embassy official, however, that his government will not allow arms shipments destined for Uganda to transit Kenya from the port of Mombasa until it is certain Amin is living up to the August agreement.

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[redacted] The Kenyans are apparently still concerned about Amin's military intentions--especially in light of recent reports of a new Soviet-Ugandan arms agreement--and about his close ties to Palestinian representatives in Kampala. Kenya still fears some kind of retaliation for its involvement in the Entebbe operation.

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[redacted]

ETHIOPIA: Dissidence

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[redacted] Ethiopia's ruling military council continues to face serious dissidence among government troops in Eritrea Province, where the separatist insurgency continues.

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[redacted] The units reportedly acted against the officers to prevent the execution of as many as 80 soldiers accused of dereliction of duty. The soldiers, members of a new division only recently sent to Eritrea, discarded their weapons and fled the scene of combat. They were captured by insurgents, who released them after taking their uniforms. Military commanders in Asmara ordered the soldiers executed.

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[redacted] //The detained officers were released following a meeting between dissidents and senior government officials--including special representatives of the military council-[redacted]

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[redacted] The council has long been contending with indiscipline among veteran troops in Eritrea, who have appeared at times to be on the verge of revolt. The troops are war-weary, and many disagree with the council's pursuit of a military victory over separatist guerrillas. Many doubtless were sympathetic toward the new recruits who deserted under fire.

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[redacted] The troops in Eritrea probably also still resent the execution last July of General Getachew Nadew, then the top commander in Eritrea, for alleged antiregime activity. Some officers at the time reportedly discussed organizing a coup, but troops loyal to the council reassured control and arrested at least six of the dissidents.

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[redacted] The government has announced the arrest of two persons in connection with the assassination on Friday of an influential civilian adviser to the council. The killing probably was carried out by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party, an underground Marxist organization opposed to military rule.

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[redacted] In its public statements, the council has indicated it believes the party was responsible for the assassination attempt in late September against Major Mengistu, the council's first vice chairman. Many party members have been arrested in recent weeks in a government crackdown.

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RHODESIA: Nationalist Talks

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[redacted] The talks between the Zimbabwe African National Union and the Zimbabwe African People's Union are now taking place in Maputo, and are expected to shift to Dar es Salaam soon.//

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[redacted] //ZAPU representatives are said to be insisting that political unity must be achieved before military forces can be united. ZANU, which commands the loyalty of most of the guerrillas, refuses to enter into anything but a loose political alliance. ZANU leaders fear that political unity would only redound to the benefit of ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo, whom they have long distrusted.//

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[redacted] //ZANU representatives also met last week in Lusaka with representatives of the faction led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa [redacted]

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[redacted] Muzorewa had been left out of the original unity talks by the other factions and the "front-line" African presidents. Muzorewa's welcome home to Rhodesia last Sunday by a large and enthusiastic crowd, after over a year of self-imposed exile, suggests that he hopes to exploit his political following there to become a key figure in settlement talks again.

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[redacted] The guerrilla leaders, as distinct from the nationalist politicians, continue to take a hard line in public on a settlement. At a press conference in Maputo last week, a guerrilla leader said that the fighting will continue until the Smith government is prepared to surrender unconditionally.

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[redacted] //The guerrillas reportedly have decided, however, that at any conference to set up an interim government they will be represented by a delegation likely to be headed by ZANU spokesman Robert Mugabe.

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USSR-ROMANIA: Ceausescu's Speech

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[redacted] In a speech to an army-party meeting on October 1, Romanian President Ceausescu publicly reaffirmed the country's intent to honor military commitments under the Warsaw Treaty and bilateral friendship pacts. He nonetheless made it clear that Bucharest will not alter its independent stance in Warsaw Pact affairs.

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[redacted] The Romanians are preparing for a meeting of the Pact's political consultative committee, which reportedly will be held later this year in Bucharest. The committee has not met there in ten years.

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[redacted] Such professions of fealty by Romania to its military allies are infrequent but not new, and a comparison of Ceausescu's remarks with earlier speeches on the same theme does not indicate a significant shift from Bucharest's previous position.

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[redacted] In trying to take the sting out of his repeated calls for the rapid and simultaneous dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, Ceausescu said that, even without the military blocs, Romania would have to continue collaborating with the armies of the "socialist" states.

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[redacted] His speech, however, returned several times to the idea that the Romanian army's primary role is the defense of the homeland against any invader.

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[redacted] Ceausescu also pledged to continue developing contacts with the armed forces of "other socialist and friendly states"---implying China, the developing countries, and Western nations. Bucharest frequently exchanges military delegations with states outside the Warsaw Pact in an effort to bolster its independent image, a practice that irritates Moscow. [redacted]

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ITALY: Socialist Party Strengthened

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The Italian Socialist Party has strengthened its base by gaining control of the country's third largest labor confederation. The Socialists were assisted in this effort by the small Social Democratic Party, whose new leadership has begun to loosen that party's traditional ties with the ruling Christian Democrats.

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At a meeting of the Union of Italian Workers' central committee on September 30, Socialist Giorgio Benvenuto was elected secretary general, replacing the Republican Party incumbent, who had served for the past six years. The vote was strictly along party lines, with all 79 Socialists and

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Social Democrats voting for the incumbent's ouster and 30 Republicans opposing it. The two largest Italian labor confederations are dominated by the Communists and Christian Democrats.

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[redacted] This will help the Socialists challenge Communist predominance in the labor movement, and provides party secretary Bettino Craxi with a personal victory at a time when he is facing a test of strength with left-wing members of his own party led by former secretary Francesco De Martino.

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[redacted] The Social Democrats' support of the Socialist candidate--reversing their earlier position--evidently was dictated from party headquarters, where a meeting of the Central Committee was in progress. The decision apparently is part of a larger strategy designed to give the Social Democrats greater flexibility in both local and national politics, even if this means playing down the party's traditional anticomunist stance.

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[redacted] In recent months the Social Democrats have been breaking their alliances with the Christian Democrats at the regional and local levels and casting their lot with parties of the left.

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[redacted] The left-wing Social Democratic leaders who gained control of the party in March solidified their hold last Friday with the election of Pierluigi Romita as party secretary. He replaces Giuseppe Saragat, who resigned following the June 20 parliamentary election. The party blamed its poor showing in the election on the Christian Democrats' campaign claims that votes cast for the smaller lay parties would be wasted.

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[redacted] Although the Social Democrats say they do not want to reunite with the Socialists at this time, the two parties have similar attitudes toward the Christian Democrats and the Communists and are likely to work together often.

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[redacted] With both parties trying to emphasize their independence from the Christian Democrats, any efforts to put together a workable center-left coalition any time soon will encounter formidable obstacles. [redacted]

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THAILAND: Student Unrest

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[redacted] Violence erupted briefly this morning at Thammasat University, where protesters against former prime minister Thanom's continued presence in Thailand have been gathering for several days. The fighting apparently was provoked by the arrival of armed vocational students, frequently used by right-wing elements to intimidate university radicals.

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[redacted] //Although the military has been put on full alert//--standard procedure during unrest--police units that forced their way onto the campus apparently have brought the situation under control. The outbreak of violence will put further pressure on Prime Minister Seni to reach a decision regarding Thanom, //but alleged slurs against the monarchy, which reportedly led to the arrest of several student leaders,// may harden conservative resistance to Thanom's forced departure from the country. [redacted]

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